

## REMARKS

Claims 1 and 16 are amended herein, and new claims 24-25 are added. Thus, claims 1-9 and 15-25 are pending in this application. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

The Office has rejected claims 1, 4-9, and 18-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,951,441 to Dalebout et al. (Dalebout) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,063,463 to Nordengren (Nordengren). In addition, the Office has rejected claims 2-3 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dalebout in view of Nordengren and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,728,673 to Driver (Driver).

In particular, the Office asserts that Dalebout discloses a belt comprising a substrate (18/50) having a first and second surfaces and first and second ends, which form a seam, an elastomeric (20/30) having first and second ends and surfaces, wherein the elastomer is adjacent and in contact with the first surface of the substrate and the first and second ends of the elastomer form an interlocking puzzle cut seam (col. 4, lines 26-34).

The Office correctly states that Dalebout does not disclose that the first and second ends are mechanically, frictionally and detachable interlocked together by a between the ends. However, the Office asserts that Nordengren discloses a belt having first and second ends with interlocking puzzle cuts seam that are mechanically and frictionally locked together in order to frictionally lock the ends of the belt and to form a very strong joint, and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the seam of Dalebout to include the puzzle cut of Nordengren in order to frictionally lock the ends of the belt together and to form a very strong joint.

In addition, the Office asserts that, while Dalebout in view of Nordengren fail to disclose that both of the first and second seams are interlocked, Driver discloses a belt with adjacent materials (1, 2) in contact with each other having interlocking ends in order to create a smooth, flat surface to an strengthen the seamed joints, and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the belt of Dalebout so that both seamed joints are interlocking joints in view of Driver in order to create a smooth, flat surface and to an strengthen the seamed joints.

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